

Town of Belmont – Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards

1. Introduction



These Design Standards are adopted pursuant to the authority of Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 40R “Smart Growth Zoning” and 760 CMR 59.00, and Section 6C of the Town of Belmont Zoning By-laws (the “District By-law”). They complement the District By-law, and provide the Town of Belmont with a regulatory framework that will define the site and building design requirements for development within the Town’s Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District (“District”).

This document is organized into subject headings based on the areas of regulation. Where it provides greater clarity regarding desired design outcomes, illustrative images have been used to complement these Design Standards. Captions have been added to images as necessary to clarify the intent of the illustration and to reinforce the Design Standards included in the text.

2. Purpose and Applicability

These Design Standards supplement Section 6C Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District (“District”) of the Town of Belmont Zoning By-laws (“District By-law”).



Aerial Image of the Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District.

This document shall be used by the Planning Board of the Town of Belmont (the “Planning Board”) in their review and consideration of Development Projects proposed pursuant to the District By-law. A Development Project shall be approved by the Planning Board upon a finding with the Standards for Compliance contained herein, unless otherwise waived pursuant to the District By-law.

These Design Standards shall be in effect upon adoption by a majority of the Planning Board and approval of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (“Department”). The Design Standards as authorized by Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 40R may be amended from time to time with the approval of the Department.

In the case of inconsistency between the District By-law and these Design Standards, the District By-law shall govern. In the case of inconsistency between applicable state or federal laws, including, without limitation, state building codes or life safety codes, and these Design Standards, the applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations shall govern.

3. Definition of Terms

Definitions of technical or other capitalized terms used in these Design Standards can be found in Section 6C.1.4 of the District By-law.

4. Design Standards

To ensure that Development Projects shall be of high quality, and shall meet the standards envisioned by the Town of Belmont in adopting Smart Growth Zoning, the physical character of the Development Project within the Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District (ON) shall comply with, and the Approving Authority shall enforce, the following Design Standards in the issuance of Site Plan Approval for a Development Project within the ON. The Design Standards include standards as authorized at 760 CMR 59.04(1)(f) not only governing the design of buildings but also the dimensions and layouts of roadways and parking areas, consistent with the character of building types, streetscapes and other features of the Oakley Neighborhood and traditionally found in densely settled areas of the Town of Belmont, the protection of natural site features, the location and design of on-site open spaces, exterior signage and landscaping and other buffering in relation to adjacent properties, and the standards for the construction and maintenance of drainage facilities within the Development Project.

4.1. Scale, Proportion and Exterior Appearance of Buildings.

- 4.1.1. Building renovations should retain the character of the Historically Significant Buildings, including that of the Convent building, while accommodating the need to introduce new elements for circulation, entrances, light and air for each Dwelling Unit within a Historic Building.
- 4.1.2. Windows and Doors. All buildings shall contain doors and windows of durable material such as wood, steel, and aluminum that require minimal future maintenance, and meet the minimum thermal resistance requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code.



Typical Two-family home within the Oakley Neighborhood.

Town of Belmont – Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards



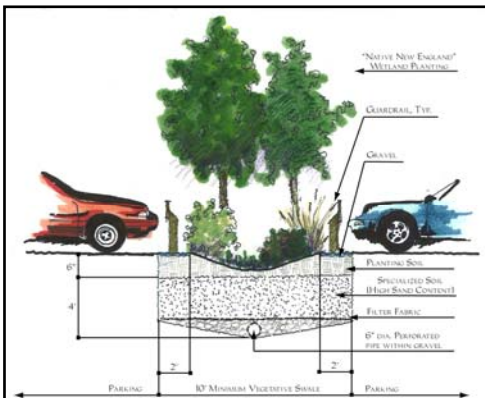
Example of windows, a balcony, and siding that would satisfy these Design Standards.



Sidewalk with a uniform travel surface, and curb cut unencumbered by parked cars.



Dumpsters, utilities, mechanical equipment, etc. shall be screened from view.



The illustration above shows a bioretention basin within a parking area. Bioretention basins result in treatment of stormwater runoff before it recharges into the soil, and improved water quality.

- 4.1.3. Screening. Rooftop building systems (such as mechanical and electrical equipment, antennas, satellite dishes) shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and from structures on adjacent lots by integrating them into the building design with parapets, screens or by other methods acceptable to the Approving Authority.
- 4.1.4. Balconies and/or porches, dormers, canopies and cornices are permitted, but should be constructed of durable materials such as wood, brick, stone, stucco, manufactured limestone, masonry, cast stone, tile, and sustainable materials that require minimum future maintenance and meet minimum structural loading requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code.
- 4.1.5. Materials. Material selection should be durable with the intent to minimize the maintenance required to keep in good condition. Materials such as wood shingles, clapboard, brick and stone are encouraged. Reflective materials such as porcelain enamel or sheet metal are not permitted.
- 4.1.6. In Renovation development projects, the façade(s) of any building that is determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be appropriately rehabilitated, as provided in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CFR Part 67).
- 4.1.7. Dormers may be added to roof of the Church provided that the floor area of the second floor of the Church shall not exceed seventy percent (70%) of the first floor area of the Church.
- 4.1.8. Two- or three-family dwellings should be designed to appear as single-family homes to the greatest extent practical. Parking shall be located in the side or rear of the building relative to the streets, and should be screened with a combination of stone walls or fencing, and landscaping. If the two- or three-family dwelling includes two entrances, consideration should be given to placing the entrances on two different sides of the building. Two- or three-family dwellings should not be symmetrical in design, and should include a variety of rooflines, as well as features such as porches and terraces.
- 4.2. Placement, Alignment, Width and Grade of Streets and Sidewalks.
 - 4.2.1. The pedestrian environment of the Oakley Neighborhood shall be maintained by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken by vehicular access and parking.
 - 4.2.2. Sidewalks should provide a uniform travel surface for people who use wheelchairs, carriages, walkers, bicycles or scooters.
- 4.3. Type and Location of Infrastructure.
 - 4.3.1. Building and site design should be adequate to achieve compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria, as promulgated by the U.S. Green Building Council, and in effect as of the date of adoption of the District By-law.
 - 4.3.2. To the extent possible, new utilities shall be located underground. To the maximum extent feasible, all dumpsters, utilities, mechanical equipment, storage and service areas shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and from structures on neighboring lots in existence at the time of Site Plan Approval with plantings and/or landscape structures. In no cases shall dumpsters be permitted to be located within the required Front Setback.
 - 4.3.3. Storm Water Management. Storm water management systems for the Development Project shall not increase the volume, rate, or further degrade the quality of existing discharges/runoff. Post-development peak runoff shall be maintained at or below pre-development peak runoff rates. The use of Low Impact Development strategies such as bioretention basins, drainage swales and permeable paving surfaces is encouraged. Retention and detention ponds are prohibited.
 - 4.3.4. Operation and Maintenance Plan. An operation and maintenance plan is required prior to initiation of site work for all approved Development Projects and shall be designed to ensure that compliance with the District By-law and the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards, 314, CMR

4.00, is met in all seasons and throughout the life of the system. The Operation and Maintenance Plan shall remain on file with the Approving Authority and shall be an ongoing requirement.

- 4.3.5. Erosion Control. Any area of bare earth exposed through building or Project Development or demolition must be permanently stabilized through replanting, paving, or other means of eliminating wind or water erosion. Any removal of vegetation shall be done in a way which will minimize soil erosion. Pursuant to Section 4.6.2, trees and other natural vegetation should be retained, protected, and supplemented. Where necessary, temporary vegetation and/or mulching should be used to protect areas exposed during development. The development plan and-or land-disturbing activity should maintain the existing topography and soils so as to minimize earthwork and reduce potential erosion.

4.4. Location of Building and Garage Entrances.

- 4.4.1. All pedestrian paths and entry areas shall be lighted consistent with the requirements herein and entry areas should provide protection from adverse weather through the use of porches or entryways.

- 4.4.2. Building design and location of garages and driveways should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and existing streets and intersections by consolidating access to a limited number of curb cuts.

- 4.4.3. The following table establishes the maximum number of allowable vehicular curb cuts in each Sub-District including vehicular curb cuts in existence as of the date of adoption of the District By-law provided, however, that existing curb cuts may be relocated to another location subject to the approval of the Approving Authority, and provided further that the Approving Authority may waive this limitation upon a finding that a greater number of curb cuts will not interfere with safe vehicular and pedestrian mobility along the named streets:

ON Sub-District	Maximum Number of Total Sub-District Curb Cuts	Maximum Number of Vehicular Curb Cuts per Street Frontage		
		Belmont Street	Oakley Road	Lawndale Street
ON Church Buildings Sub-District	3	3	0	0
ON Senior Center Sub-District	2	0	2	2
ON Rectory Sub-District	1	0	0	1
ON Triangle Sub-District	2	1	2	0

- 4.4.4. Curb cuts for driveways shall be located a minimum of forty (40) feet away from the point of tangency of street lines with radii at street intersections.

4.5. Off-Street Parking.

- 4.5.1. New parking areas, exclusive of access driveways, shall be set back from street lines and property lines a minimum of ten feet (10'). Parking located nearer to the street than the building that the parking serves shall be governed by Section 5.1.3(b) of the Underlying Zoning in effect as of the date of adoption of the District By-law. Parking layouts should minimize nuisance from car headlights that beam into residential dwellings through the use of visual screening by use of plantings or fencing. Alleys in the ON Church Buildings Sub-District are permissible to provide multi-purpose parking areas.

- 4.5.2. Parking spaces shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet by eighteen (18) feet in size, in addition to one hundred (100) square feet of maneuvering area per parking space.

- 4.5.3. Design and construction of shared parking facilities to serve Dwelling Units in the ON Church Buildings Sub-District is strongly encouraged in order to



Garage location should minimize the impact of parking areas and driveways.

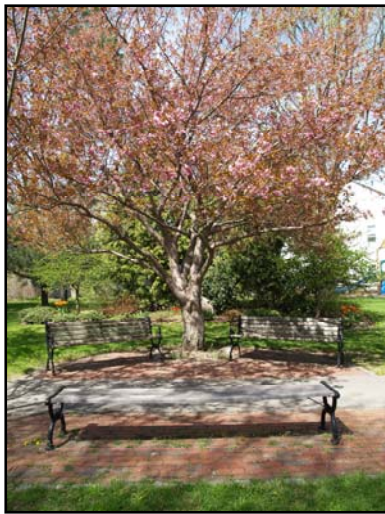


Example of surface parking screened by plantings.

Town of Belmont – Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards



Trees of significant stature should be incorporated into a site's development.



Site design should include common space and be integrated with the built environment.



Landscape plantings should be native and able to withstand New England weather cycles.

minimize both vehicular curb cuts on public streets and the need for vehicular travel lanes within the Lots.

4.6. Protection of Significant Natural Site Features.

- 4.6.1. Location and design of buildings shall not cause avoidable removal or damage to any tree exceeding twelve (12) inches trunk diameter measured at a point four feet above grade as of the date of adoption of the District By-law.
- 4.6.2. Specific trees for protection should be reviewed at the pre-application review with the Approving Authority. Site Plans submitted to the Approving Authority shall identify trees to be preserved. Trees shall be tagged in the field within the project review process and appropriately designated on project plans.

4.7. Location and Design of On-Site Open Spaces.

- 4.7.1. Design and location. The overall site design shall include common open space and facilities designed to be functional and well-integrated with the built environment. Wherever practicable, existing trees and plantings shall be maintained. Consideration will be given to creating open space that is visually and functionally accessible to the public.
- 4.7.2. Within Renovation projects, open space surrounding existing buildings shall be maintained. Any new structures and outdoor parking areas shall be screened with evergreen shrubbery which shall be a minimum five (5) feet in height at time of building occupancy, and be planted to maintain adequate sight lines for pedestrians and motor vehicles. Adequacy of vehicular sight distance shall be reviewed and determined in accordance with accepted AASHTO methodology based on posted or observed speeds on adjacent roadways.
- 4.7.3. Ownership and maintenance. The plans and documentation submitted to the Approving Authority shall include a description of proposed ownership and maintenance of all common open space or facilities.
- 4.7.4. Plans. The plans and any necessary supporting documents submitted with an application for Site Plan Approval within the ON shall show the general location, size, character, and general area within which common open space or facilities will be located.

4.8.

Landscaping. Existing vegetation should be preserved if feasible and healthy. Plant materials should be chosen to withstand seasonal weather cycles in New England and for compatibility with existing plantings in the Oakley Neighborhood, with consideration for resistance to infestations, resilience to climate exposure, water availability and drainage conditions. Native species must be used.

4.9.

Lighting.

- 4.9.1. All exterior lighting shall comply with the requirements of Section 5.4.3 of the Underlying Zoning in effect as of the date of adoption of the District By-law.
- 4.9.2. Subject to compliance with the lighting requirements, distinctive features of buildings including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest may be illuminated.

4.10.

Buffering in Relation to Adjacent Properties.

- 4.10.1. Noise. Noise from the Development Project shall at all times comply with the requirements of Article 23 of the Belmont General By-laws in effect as of the date of adoption of the District By-law.
- 4.10.2. Appropriate Development. Wherever it abuts existing development, new development should incorporate design transitions between new buildings and existing buildings, using comparable materials, roof design, fencing materials and landscaping.

For further information contact:

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